

the PATRIOT Act for at least 3 months.

We were unable to reach an agreement at that meeting.

Then on the floor Senator HARRY REID of Nevada, on behalf of the Democrats, offered before the vote to the Republican side of the aisle to extend the PATRIOT Act as it is presently written for 3 months so that there would not be any possible gap in coverage for the security of America. There was an objection from the Republican side.

After the cloture vote on the PATRIOT Act—in fact, cloture was not invoked—another motion was made, this time by Senator PATRICK LEAHY of Vermont. Senator LEAHY asked for a 3-month extension of the PATRIOT Act so we could work out the differences.

Not once, not twice, but three separate times today on the Democratic side of the aisle we have reached out to the Republican side of the aisle and said let us try to resolve our differences in a bipartisan way, let us try to make sure that we extend the PATRIOT Act so there is no question about the security of America.

Tomorrow the President will address this issue. I hope in the course of addressing it the President acknowledges the obvious. We have tried our very best on a bipartisan basis to extend the PATRIOT Act, once informally and twice on the floor of the Senate today, and all three times it has been rejected.

We will continue to make that offer on the Democratic side. We want to work this out. We want a good PATRIOT Act that protects America and protects our freedoms. We believe we can be safe in America and we can be free.

I think a bipartisan vote today is a message to the White House and to the House conferees that the Senate bill that was passed, a carefully crafted bill, is a bill that should get us into the reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act.

We stand ready to work with our Republican colleagues on a bipartisan basis to make sure we have a good, strong PATRIOT Act reauthorized and protecting America, and take out those objectionable provisions which go too far in invading the personal rights of and privacy of innocent American citizens.

I hope that particular scenario I described, which is on the official record today, is part of the President's message tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

#### NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, the conference report on the authorization of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is in its final stages of being approved. There are some things that are still to be worked out, but I am proud to have been the subcommittee chairman of the NASA

Science Subcommittee that produced—along with the House, of course, and the full Commerce Committee—what I think is an excellent authorization of our National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

I worked with my colleague, Senator NELSON of Florida, to produce a bill that does envision the flight to space, the flight to the moon again, and then to Mars. It is the vision laid out by President Bush in January of 2004. It is incumbent on Congress to lead the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and also to support it fully so that we will continue the vision that John F. Kennedy had when he said: We will put a man on the moon. Now we can take it the next step and put a man on Mars, a woman on Mars.

It is important that we understand that this is important not only because it is a huge feat and victory for the world that we can do this but also because we get so much basic science from making this commitment. It improves our quality of life right here on Earth.

This conference committee report does authorize funding for NASA at \$17.9 billion in 2007 and \$18.7 billion for 2008. That gets us on track to fund the shuttles that will continue to build out the space station and also to begin immediate work on the crew return vehicle that will be the next generation of vehicle going into space after the space station has been completed.

It is a congressional responsibility to set the parameters for what we do with NASA, and we are taking that responsibility seriously. We believe that we should finish the space station, finish the international commitment that we have made to our partners and allies who have put millions of dollars in the space station, and so that we can continue the basic science research necessary, not only for us to learn how we can live and work in space for those people who will be going to the moon again and then later to Mars but also for the basic geological findings we know we can find if we explore the Moon and hopefully Mars. And something that was said at one of our Commerce Committee hearings by Dr. Sam Ting of MIT, there is very important physics research that using the cosmic rays to determine how we might have alternative forms of energy is a very important purpose for the space station to be completed.

This report also designates the U.S. portion of the space station as a national laboratory so that we can bring other funds besides NASA funds, besides Government funds into the space station, and that will help make sure we are able to do the most possible research and make the best use of the space station. It demonstrates that Congress puts a great value on the research that can be done aboard the space station and also a great value on keeping our word to our international partners.

America must lead in the space exploration and science area, but we

must do it in collaboration with other countries. I don't think we should just consider ourselves competitors with other countries. If we are going to be the leader, we should lead. We should go forward. We should break the barriers. And we should share with others what we have learned for the good of mankind. That is exactly what this bill envisions.

It also supports aeronautical research. This has been a fundamental part of NASA activities since its inception. It will allow us to continue the great work that has been done in the past. It will assure that we take the next step toward the crew return vehicle that will replace the shuttle at the earliest possible time. We will accelerate that process.

I am very proud of this conference report. The House and Senate worked together very well. It was a bipartisan effort and a bicameral effort. We are going to see a new impetus for NASA with the support of Congress and the President. That is exactly what this country should be doing at this time.

I yield the floor.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT DAN CUKA

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I am saddened to report the passing of SSG Dan Cuka of Yankton, SD. Staff Sergeant Cuka, a member of the South Dakota National Guard, was killed on December 4, 2005, while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Staff Sergeant Cuka was assigned to Yankton's Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery Unit. Charlie Battery was mobilized in July 2005 and deployed to the Middle East in October 2005. Staff Sergeant Cuka died when multiple improvised explosive devices detonated near his military vehicle in Baghdad, Iraq.

Dan is survived by his wife of 5 years, Melissa, and their children, Abby and Alex. Melissa remembers him as, "living each day of his life the way he chose based on devotion to his family and his passion for the military. We all believe Dan died doing what he strongly believed in." He was regarded as taking his military duty very seriously, and his leadership in his battalion reflected that. Dan was a devoted father who would do anything for his kids according to Melissa, "It wasn't just as a provider. He would get on the floor and play with them. He would take them places and have a good time with them."

The lives of countless people were enormously enhanced by Dan's good will and service. Although he did not live to see his dreams realized, he continues to inspire all those who knew him. Our Nation and South Dakota are far better places because of his life, and the best way to honor his life is to emulate his commitment to our country.

Mr. President, I express my sympathies to the family and friends of